

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

RSR-01 /082 W

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P R 151207 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4108

WHITE HOUSE PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

CDR USSAG NKP

CINCPAC

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 3664

WHITE HOUSE FOR GENERAL SCOWCROFT

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, MOPS, PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: SOUVANNA'S EVALUATION OF STATUS LAO
NEGOTIATIONS

SUMMARY: SOUVANNA CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT LAO NEGOTIA-
TIONS CAN ONLY PROGRESS IF HANOI GIVES GREEN LIGHT.
ALTHOUGH HE SUBMITTED NEW PROPOSAL TO BREAK IMPASSE TO
LPF CHIEF NEGOTIATOR PHOUMI VONGVICHIT MAY 14, WHICH
WILL BE HAND CARRIED TO SAM NEUA THIS WEEK, SOUVANNA
BELIEVES LPF WILL AWAIT RESULTS OF KISSINGER- THO
MEETING BEFORE MAKING NEXT MOVE. IN MEETING THIS
MORNING, SOUVANNA BRIEFED ME ON DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RLG
AND LPF POSITIONS ON THREE BASIC ISSUES BLOCKING IMPL-
EMENTATION OF FEBRUARY VIENTIANE AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. AT PRIME MINISTER'S REQUEST I CALLED ON HIM MORNING
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MAY 15. PRIME MINISTER WISHED TO GIVE ME HIS ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT STATUS OF LAO NEGOTIATIONS TO TRANSMIT TO WASHINGTON PRIOR TO DR. KISSINGER'S DEPARTURE FOR HIS MEETING WITH LE DUC THO.

2. PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HE HOPED DR. KISSINGER WOULD STRESS TO LE DUCH THO THAT LAO PROBLEM CAN BE RESOLVED RAPIDLY AND SATISFACTORILY IF DRV WOULD RESPECT ARTICLE 20 OF PARIS AGREEMENT AND PROVISIONS OF 1962 GENEVA ACCORD ON LAOS, I. E. THUS PROVIDING LATITUDE FOR LAO PARTIES TO SOLVE LAO PROBLEMS THEMSELVES. ON BASIS 2-1/2 MONTHS OF NEGOTIATIONS SINCE VIENTIANE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED, SOUVANNA CONCLUDED THAT LPF IS CLEARLY STALLING BECAUSE HANOI DOES NOT WANT LAO TO BE OUT OF STEP WITH REST OF INDOCHINA. SOUVANNA EXPLAINED THAT DIFFERENCES IN POSITIONS BETWEEN LPF AND RLG CONTINUE TO EXIST BUT IF LPF REALLY " WANTED TO SETTLE", WAYS COULD BE FOUND DO SO. SOUVANNA SAID NOTHING OF SUBSTANCE WILL HAPPEN IN LAOS UNTIL RESULTS OF KISSINGER- THO MEETINGS ARE KNOWN. IF PROGRESS IS MADE IN RESOLVING CAMBODIAN AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE PROBLEMS, LAO NEGOTIATIONS WILL ALSO REGISTER MOVEMENT, SOUVANNA SAID.

3. WITHOUT HAVING ANY ILLUSIONS THAT IT WILL LEAD TO SPECTACULAR BREAKTHROUGH, BUT IN EFFORT TO MOVE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD IN LAOS, SOUVANNA SUBMITTED TO PHOUMI VONGVICHIT MAY 14 FOLLOWING PROPOSAL ON THREE ISSUES ONWHICH NEGOTIATIONS ARE DEADLOCKED:
A. DISTRIBUTION OF PORTFOLIOS IN COALITION GOVERNMENT: RLG WOULD HOLD MINISTRIES OF INTERIOR, DEFENSE, EDUCATION, AND FINANCE. PATHET LAO WOULD RECEIVE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INFORMATION, PUBLICWORKS AND ECONOMY. " NEUTRAL TECHNICIANS" WOULD BE PUT IN CHARGE OF MINISTRY OF JUSTICE (WHICH WOULD ALSO INCLUDE FUNCTIONS FORMERLY CARRIED OUT BY SEPARATE MINISTRY OF RELIGION), PTT, AND PLAN. RLG SCHEME CALLS FOR NO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTERSHIP. RLG WOULD NAME PRIME MINISTER OF COALITION GOVERNMENT (SOUVANNA PHOUMA) WHILE PATHET LAO WOULD RECEIVE PRESIDENCY OF JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL. SOUVANNA SAID PROPOSAL WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO PHOUMI WHO CONTINUED TO HOLD OUT FOR VICE PRIME MINISTERSHIP FOR SOUPHANOUVONG.

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B. SECURITY FOR PATHET LAO MINISTERS: THIS QUESTION TURNS AROUND NEUTRALIZATION OF VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG WHICH IS FORESEEN IN ARTICLE 9 OF FEBRUARY VIENTIANE AGREEMENT. RLG PROPOSED A JOINT POLICE FORCE IN VIENTIANE OF 2,000 MEN AND LUANG PRABANG OF 1,000 MEN WITH EACH SIDE PROVIDING HALF. RLG WOULD ALSO WITHDRAW ARMORED UNITS FROM VIENTIANE AND LUANG

PRABANG. PHOUMI REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL AND CONTINUED TO HOLD OUT FOR PATHET LAO STATIONING THREE LPF BATTALIONS OUTSIDE VIENTIANE AND TWO BATTALIONS OUTSIDE LUANG PRABANG.

C. IMPLEMENTATION OF CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT. PATHET LAO WANT A DEMARCATION LINE AT 35 SITES WHERE TWO ARMIES ARE IN CONTACT. THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE 5 ICC TEAMS STATIONED IN THOSE AREAS WHERE TWO SIDES ARE IN DIRECT CONTACT BUT NO ICC TEAMS WOULD HAVE SUPERVISORY OR CONTROL FUNCTIONS IN LPF ADMINISTERED ZONE. SOUVANNA IS OPPOSED TO PLACING OF DEMARCATION STAKES WHICH HE FEELS WOULD PERPETUATE PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY. RLG IS ALSO ASKING FOR 42 FIXED ICC TEAMS.

3. SOUVANNA SAID HE TOLD PHOUMI THAT IF LPF IS SINCERE IN CONCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS RAPIDLY. IT SHOULD ACCEPT FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT AS FIRST STEP IN IMPLEMENTING VIENTIANE ACCORD. HE AGREED THAT QUESTION OF PROVIDING SECURITY FOR LPF MINISTERS MUST BE SETTLED SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT, BUT SETTLEMENT OF REMAINING QUESTIONS SHOULD BE DEFERRED UNTIL LATER. PHOUMI TOLD SOUVANNA THAT TIAO SOUK VONGSAK AND MAHA KOU, TWO MEMBERS
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